

For that to happen, the countries of the region have to accelerate their political and economic reforms, and the donor community needs to support the region's efforts.

I am very pleased by the progress that has been made on both fronts. The Governments of southeast Europe have begun to take steps to implement the reforms they have promised, including those that will improve their investment climate and strengthen the rule of law. And today the donor community, including the United States, has reaffirmed its support for the region. We have agreed to fund Quick Start Projects ready to begin this year that will improve regional infrastructure, fight corruption,

and advance reform. Countries have pledged \$2.3 billion for these projects, out of a broader package of total assistance to southeast Europe in 2000 estimated at over \$6 billion. Over 85 percent of this assistance is being provided by European countries and institutions together with international financial institutions. I congratulate our European partners for their leadership.

The message today from Brussels is clear. A democratic southeast Europe is on the road to a better future. While Serbia was represented at this Conference by the opposition, we look forward to the day when it will be represented by a democratic government.

## Statement on House Action on Supplemental Appropriations Legislation March 30, 2000

I am pleased that the House of Representatives today took action that would meet many of the essential, immediate needs in my supplemental budget request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and providing for our troops in Kosovo.

It is vital that Congress avoid delay in meeting these needs; the costs of delay are great. A delay in Kosovo funding would soon jeopardize our current level of military readiness around the world and our ability to help the people of Kosovo build peace and a better future. A delay in support for Colombia's antidrug efforts would signal that Colombia lacks the international support to prevail against drug traffickers. At home, delaying funding for the victims of Hurricane Floyd would leave thousands in temporary housing possibly through their second winter and without funding to replenish the program for home energy assistance. A delay in LIHEAP funds would leave many Americans,

especially the elderly and infirm, vulnerable in the event of an extreme heat wave this summer.

The bill produced by the House today, while meeting essential needs, is also flawed. The House bill is too large—providing unnecessary funding for certain areas while failing to fund areas of the highest importance, including Embassy security for our diplomatic personnel in Kosovo and elsewhere in the region, building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops, and contributing our Nation's share to the U.N. peacekeeping force there. In addition, the House bill fails to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations.

Because the needs in my budget request are essential and immediate, I urge the Senate to turn swiftly to its work on the budget request and to produce a better, right-sized bill, that includes the necessary level of funding for Kosovo and debt relief, and that should pass without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.